

GRANT PARK HIGH SCHOOL



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Dear Parents/Guardians:

Public health has released information indicating that we are gradually returning to normal and that this begins with the removal of public health orders. While requirements are going away, public health continues to provide guidance and recommendations, similar to other communicable diseases. Public health measures in our school will continue to mirror public health measures in our community. This means that as public health removes restrictions and moves to recommendations that these changes will also apply to our school.

Fundamentals

Public Health advises that we need to continue to follow preventative measures as much as possible including:

- getting vaccinated.
- staying home when sick.
- washing hands or using alcohol-based hand sanitizer frequently.
- covering your cough or sneeze.
- assessing your risk and knowing if you are eligible for treatment.
- making decisions about additional measures based on personal risk and preference.

Public Health Measures

Effective tomorrow (March 15th), the public health orders for isolation of individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19 are being removed. The orders are being transitioned to public health guidelines, similar to how other communicable diseases are managed.

Isolation for COVID-19 is still advised for people with symptoms. In these cases individuals should stay home and isolate for five days after symptoms start, until they have no fever and other symptoms have improved over the past 24 hours. In cases where individuals have tested positive but do not develop symptoms public health is advising folks to isolate for five days from the date of the test. Individuals should wear a well-fitted, well-made mask when their isolation is finished, for 10 days after the onset of symptoms, or test date if asymptomatic.

Masks

Effective March 15th, masks will no longer be required at school or while on school transportation. As mask requirements are removed, it is important to note that anyone can continue to wear a mask based on their individual risk and or preference. Public health continues to recommend masks:

- for those who are at higher risk of severe disease.
- for those who are at higher risk of severe illness attending a crowded indoor setting, or if in a setting where many people are at higher risk for severe disease.
- for individuals who are sick or who have tested positive for COVID-19. They should wear a mask for 10 days after symptoms develop when they leave isolation and have contact with others.
- for individuals caring for someone who is sick or has tested positive for COVID-19.

The school will continue to have masks available for students who become ill while they are at school and are waiting to be picked up.

Testing

Rapid Antigen Tests are now more widely available in the community. The province is distributing over four million rapid tests to retail partners across Manitoba. Tests are currently available at eight retail chains and at Winnipeg libraries. Co-op, Shoppers Drug Mart and Walmart are all participating partners in close proximity to Grant Park.

The school's current supply of rapid antigen tests are to be reserved for students and staff for use when symptoms develop.

Testing is voluntary and should follow the guidance provided from public health officials.

Ventilation

WSD has implemented a number of processes to review and optimize the ventilation system in our school which includes:

- inside air being flushed more regularly and for longer periods.
- all supply and return grills within classrooms being inspected to ensure they are clean and not blocked to ensure maximum air flow.
- further cleaning of ventilation ductwork and reheat coils, where required, to improve air quality and flow.
- air filtration upgrades to MERV 13 filters, where possible, to further improve ventilation.
- all classrooms being measured and balanced to maximize air flows in the school.

Winnipeg School Division has retained a Mechanical Consultant to review system airflows and capacities in our schools to determine if improvements in ventilation can be provided without adversely impacting equipment performance.

The Path Forward

Public health guidance has also indicated that:

- physical distancing and cohorts are no longer required.
- that visitor and community use of schools can return to regular practice.
- that school assemblies and gathering decisions for in-person or virtual delivery can be made at the school level.
- routine cleaning and disinfecting practices will continue with a focus on high touch surface areas.
- there will be no further restrictions on music activities.
- schools should continue to provide options, to allow for broad participation, which takes into consideration the range of individual risks and preferences.
- school transportation can return to regular policies and practices.

The school will be taking a measured and systemic approach toward meeting these measures and will transition as it is operationally feasible. Further information regarding specific area transitions, including the possible provision of lockers, will be communicated following Spring Break (March 28th – April 1st).

We will continue to monitor our absenteeism and COVID-19 cases and escalate concerns to the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority, Manitoba Education and inform our school community if there is higher than expected absenteeism due to COVID-19 activity. As public health continues to monitor the situation, the Grant Park High School will be reviewing and ensuring that our contingency plans are ready.

Respectfully,



Mr. J. Hutchison (he, him)
Principal